

## PREVENTION TIPS

- Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent infection.
- Cooking meat well will kill the STEC bacteria. Avoid eating undercooked meat.
- Boil untreated water and raw milk before drinking it.

## HELP PREVENT STEC FROM SPREADING

### STEC spreads easily.

Anyone with the STEC infection should stay away from childcare, school or work until being cleared by their doctor, especially:

- food handlers
- healthcare staff
- early childcare staff
- children under five attending preschool.

Family members of someone who has contracted STEC should see a doctor if they also develop symptoms.

For more information  
contact:

Healthline 0800 611 116



Your GP or health provider

**Te Whatu Ora Taranaki  
Public Health Unit**

Private Bag 2016  
New Plymouth  
Phone (06) 753 7799  
0508 834 274  
www.tdhub.org.nz

**Ministry of Health**  
www.health.govt.nz

Produced by Te Whatu Ora Taranaki  
Public Health Unit  
Phone 06 753 7799  
Email resource.room@tdhub.org.nz

Published: Communications Team  
Last Reviewed: February 2023  
Version: 1

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG FARM KIDS



## Toxin Producing E.coli (STEC/VTEC)

STEC is a bacteria that can make your children very unwell. The best prevention is regular hand washing especially:

- before eating
- after helping out on a farm
- after touching animals.



See a doctor or call **Healthline 0800 611 116** immediately if someone has any of these symptoms:

- severe stomach pains or diarrhoea
- blood in the diarrhoea
- vomiting.

**Te Whatu Ora**  
Health New Zealand

## WHAT IS STEC?

- *Shiga toxin producing E.coli* (STEC), is a nasty toxin producing bacteria, also known as VTEC (*Verotoxin producing E.coli*).
- It spreads easily and is life threatening in one in ten cases.
- **This type of E.coli is a NEW illness to New Zealand.**
- Taranaki has one of the highest rates of STEC and nearly 50% of cases end up in hospital.
- **Children under five living on and around farms are most at risk.**

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN SYMPTOMS?

- Watery diarrhoea (runny poos).
- Blood in the diarrhoea.
- Severe stomach pains.
- Vomiting.

**Please seek medical advice for any of these symptoms.**

Young children are more likely to get a severe complication called Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome (HUS) which could damage their kidneys. Symptoms of HUS include:

- looking pale
- bruising easily
- a reduction in passing urine.

**See a doctor immediately if your child develops any of these symptoms.**

## PEOPLE RISK INFECTION WHEN THEY:

- have contact with animals or animal waste
- have contact with people that have the infection
- drink unpasteurised milk or untreated water
- eat undercooked or contaminated food
- swim in water where you can't see your feet.

Beware of other possible sources of contamination such as:

- muddy puddles near animals on farms or animals' drinking troughs
- farm clothing and footwear
- dogs and other farm animals coming into the house.

## TREATMENT

- Drink plenty of fluids such as water or oral rehydration drinks available from pharmacies.
- **Seek the advice of your doctor before taking any medication for this illness as some may make it worse.**

